

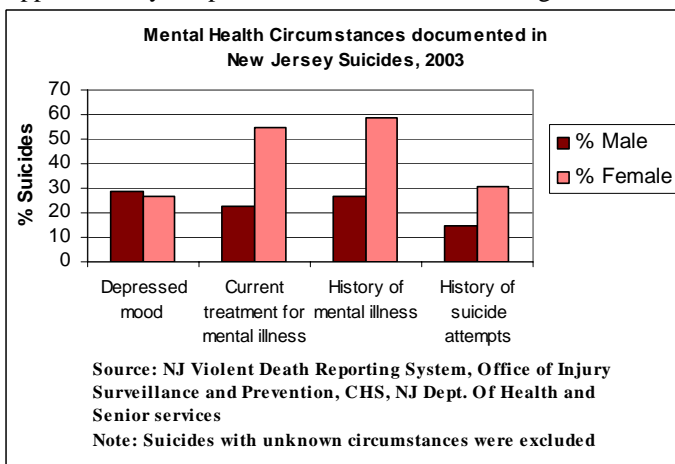


MONTHLY HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET

August 2005

Depression

- ❖ Depression is one of the world’s most common diseases. There is no single cause for depression. Some types of depression run in families, suggesting that a biological vulnerability can be inherited. Often, a combination of genetic, psychological, and environmental factors is involved in the onset of a depressive disorder.
- ❖ More than 18 million American adults or about 9.5 percent of the U.S population age 18 and older are diagnosed with a depressive disorder in a given year.
- ❖ Nearly twice as many women (12.4 million, 12 %) as men (6.4 million, 6.6%) are affected by a depressive disorder each year. Gender differences may partly be due to biological causes, such as hormones and different levels of neurotransmitters.
- ❖ The main types of depression include major depression, dysthymia, adjustment disorder, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder (SAD).
 - Major depression is a mood disturbance that lasts more than two weeks. This is the most serious type of depression in terms of the number and severity of symptoms.
 - Dysthymia, a less severe but a more continuous form of depression can last at least two years and often more than five years.
 - Adjustment disorders occur when an individual response to a stressful event or situation causes signs and symptoms of depression. It can be acute (lasting less than six months) or chronic (lasting longer).
 - Bipolar disorder, also referred to as manic-depressive disorder, manifests as recurrent episodes of extreme “lows” to excessive “highs” or mania.
 - SAD is a pattern of depression related to changes in seasons and a lack of exposure to sunlight.
- ❖ Depression also occurs frequently after childbirth, as a result of hormonal changes which occur during pregnancy. Pregnancy related depression can range from mild to severe. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimates that 70-85 percent of new mothers experience a mild short-lived depression, (often referred to as “baby blues”) after childbirth. This condition can include symptoms of sadness and anxiety and may start within three days of giving birth and can last up to 14 days.
- ❖ A far more severe type of childbirth-associated depression is postpartum or peripartum depression (PPD). Approximately ten percent of new mothers are diagnosed with PPD. Sadness, anxiety and restlessness are associated

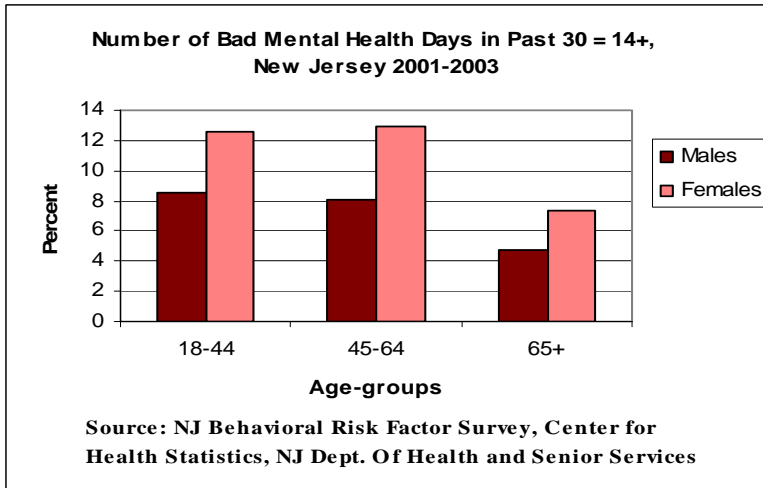


with PPD, and these feelings can interfere with daily activities and a new mother’s ability to bond with her baby. PPD can occur at any time within the first six months after giving birth, and if left untreated can last up to a year or longer.

- ❖ Depression is also associated with suicide. People with major depression have an increased risk of suicide. In 2003 there were 560 suicides in the New Jersey and over 470 had documented mental health circumstances. The age-adjusted rate of

suicide in New Jersey in 2003 was 6.3 per 100,000 population.

- ❖ In New Jersey (2001-2003), female residents ages 18-65+ were more likely to report frequent (14+) bad mental health days in the past 30 days than were males. The number of bad mental days reported declined at ages 65 years and older.



- ❖ Depression affects people of all ages and all races. However, studies have found that the rates are lower among married people, especially married men, and people in long-term, intimate relationships. Depression is also more likely to go unrecognized in older adults.
- ❖ To diagnose depression, a physician should initially perform a physical examination, including tests to rule out conditions such as certain medications and medical

conditions that can cause symptoms that mimic depression. If a physical cause for the depression is ruled out, a psychological evaluation is done, usually by a psychiatrist or psychologist.

- ❖ Depression can usually be treated successfully. The most commonly used treatments are psychotherapy and antidepressant medication. Some people with milder forms of depression may do well with psychotherapy alone, while others with moderate to severe depression often benefit from antidepressants. Most patients respond best with combined treatment.

Sources:

NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics, [New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey](#): unpublished data.

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics: [New Jersey Violent Death Reporting System, Office of Injury Surveillance and Prevention](#): unpublished data.

National Institute of Mental Health: [Depression](#)
[The Numbers Count: Mental Disorders in America](#)

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: Answers [to Common Questions about Postpartum Depression](#)

Continuing Medical Education: [Depression: An Overview](#)



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